

## RAO NEWSLETTER SPRING 2011

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Luke AFB Retiree Activities Office

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Director: Norm Gagne



This is one show that is always worth more than the admission price!!!!

SMART PHONE APPS TO HELP VETERANS

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Veterans dealing with symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can turn to their smart phones for help anytime with the PTSD Coach application created by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense. "This is about giving Veterans and Service members the help they earned when and where they need it," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "We hope them, their families and friends, will download this free app. Understanding PTSD and those who live with it is too important to ignore."

PTSD Coach lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with local sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful individualized strategies for managing PTSD symptoms at any moment. The free PTSD Coach app is now available for download from the iTunes store and will be available for Android devices by the end of the spring.

"This application acknowledges the frequency with which our Warriors and Veterans use technology and allows them to get help when and where they feel most comfortable," said Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Dr. Jonathan Woodson. The PTSD Coach is primarily designed to enhance services for individuals who are already receiving mental health care, though it is certainly helpful for those considering entering mental health care and those who just want to learn more about PTSD.

"This is a great service we are providing to Veterans, Service members, their families and friends, but it should not be seen as a replacement for traditional therapy," said VA's Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. "Veterans should utilize all of the benefits they have earned with their service and one of the best things about this app is it will get Veterans connected to the places that are out there to provide help."

The application is one of the first in a series of jointly designed resources by the VA National Center for PTSD and the Defense Department's National Center for Tele-health and Technology to help Service members, Veterans, their families and friends manage their readjustment challenges and get anonymous assistance. Given the current popularity of mobile devices, VA and the Defense Department hope to reach tens of thousands of Veterans, Service members and their family members with the new suite of apps.

Information on the PTSD Coach app is on the VA's National Center for PTSD Website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>.

[ Source: Department of Veterans Affairs]

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## **EBenefits**

**Have you heard of the combined effort of DOD and VA to improve communication to veterans, known as eBenefits?**

The eBenefits portal is an online resource that veterans can use to find and manage benefit-related information. This website is located at [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) and will allow veterans to follow the development process of their claim among many other things.

We ask that you all help get the word out to our veterans and to our active duty personnel that are about to make the transition from active duty to civilian life. Please view the site to get a better idea of all that this new website offers to our veterans.

As time goes on, the VA is improving this site to be more user-friendly. NOTE: it also has a link to state benefits.

## VA officials explain health care reform impact

Many veterans have questions about the new health care reform law. The Veterans Health Administration offers the following information about the law and its impact on VA medical care.

Nothing in the new law changes anything about VA health care.

The law contains many complex provisions, including many reforms to the practices of the health insurance industry.

Nothing in the new law changes anything about the Veterans' health care program.

Enrolled Veterans may still rely on VHA for their health care in the same manner as before the enactment of the new law.

Beginning in 2014, everyone will be required to have health care coverage.

The law requires that every individual must have some form of health care coverage. The coverage must meet a minimum standard so that everyone will be able to have a minimum level of care.

Congress wrote into the law a provision that says the Veterans' health care program, administered by VHA, meets the standard for health care coverage.

Enrolled veterans do not have to purchase additional coverage.

Because the veterans' health care program meets the standard under the law, veterans enrolled in the VA health care program do not need to obtain additional health care coverage.

Veterans may continue to purchase additional coverage if they wish, but the law does not require them to do so.

This addresses only the most pressing questions that have been raised. VHA officials will provide additional information about the new law as it develops.

[Source: VA]

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## PETS FOR PATRIOTS

Pets for Patriots is an organization that helps a veteran or active, reserve, retired service member to adopt a mature dog or cat from one of many high-risk shelters around the country. The organization provides the veteran with a gift card for the purchase of food, supplies, toys and other basics for the new pet plus discounts on veterinary fees. In order to receive their assistance you must first apply and receive a confirmation of membership from them. They will determine eligibility upon receiving both your proof of service and the application available at <http://www.petsforpatriots.org/ForPatriots/BecomeamemberPatriot.aspx>. For more information, visit the Pets for Patriots website <http://www.petsforpatriots.org>.

[Source: NAUS Weekly Update 1Apr2011]

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## Military Trivia (1)

When the Continental Navy was formed the Gadsen Flag was adopted as its official flag. It was a yellow flag with a black snake above the words "Don't tread on me". The purpose of the Navy at this time was to harass British shipping and capture its cargo. The fleet consisted of former merchant vessels converted into warships.

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The Alaska Veterans Museum has opened 20 Apr in downtown Anchorage. Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans of any state but was the only state without a veteran's museum. The new museum includes donated and loaner items including old military uniforms and letters, photos of soldiers and ship models. It is located at 333 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 227, Anchorage, AK 99501. Winter hours (1 Oct to 30 Apr) are Wednesday-Sunday, 1000 to 1700. Summer Hours (1 May to 30 Sep) are daily 1000 to 2100. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. For more information, visit the Alaska Veterans Museum website: [www.alaskaveterans.com](http://www.alaskaveterans.com).

[illegible]

Beginning on 1 Jun, as part of a campaign to protect service members, their families and retirees from identity theft, expired cards will be replaced by cards with a new and unique 10-digit identification number. (This number will also be the service member's Geneva Convention ID number). The first 9 digits of that number will identify the sponsor and the remaining 2 identify the individual person. DOD expects the full roll out to take 4 years. There will also be an 11-digit DoD number for every person who qualifies for any DoD benefits. Below are the FAQ that the DoD has sent out. So far, nothing in their information indicates what a retiree should do since his or her ID card never expires.

A5. DoD beneficiaries will also receive a DoD Benefits Number which will enable improved access to their benefits while reducing reliance on the SSN. The DoD Benefits Number is an 11 (eleven) digit number that will be

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used to determine eligibility to receive benefits. The first 9 (nine) digits are common to the sponsor. The last 2 (two) digits identify the specific person. The DoD Benefits Number will be printed only ID cards that convey benefits. The DoD Benefits Number is not in either the bar codes or the integrated circuit chip.

**Q6. Will the SSN still be in the bar codes?**

A6. The SSN will continue to be in the bar codes for now. The SSN Reduction Plan calls for the SSN to be removed from the bar codes beginning in 2012.

**Q7. When should I go get a new ID card?**

A7. Individuals will receive a new card upon expiration of the current card. Starting in June 2011, ID Card issuance facilities will begin issuing DoD ID cards without the SSN appearing on the card. Please note that until the cards expire, current cards will remain active and will not need to be replaced.

**Q8. Will I be able to use these new numbers once I get a new ID card?**

A8. The transition to the use of these new numbers, away from the use of SSNs will take place over time. Because cards will be replaced upon expiration, it will be approximately four years until all cards are placed with the DoD ID Number, and where applicable, the DoD Benefits Number. The key is to ensure that there is no lapse in service to DoD personnel during the transition period.

**Q9. Where can I get a DoD ID Card?**

A9. Individuals eligible for a DoD ID Card can contact the nearest ID Card Issuance facility (Real-time Automated Personnel Identification System [RAPIDS] site) or go to [www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home) to find the nearest location. Over 1,500 RAPIDS sites with over 2250 workstations worldwide issue identification cards.

**Q10. What documentation is required to receive an ID Card?**

A10. Two valid original forms of ID from the OMB I-9 document list. One must be a federal or state issued photo ID. Visit <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf> for more information.

**Q11. Where can I use my new ID card?**

A11. The new ID card can be used at all locations where current ID cards are accepted.

**Q12. Will my ID card be rejected without a visible SSN?**

A12. No, your ID should not be rejected without a visible SSN; however, you may be asked to verbally state you or your sponsor's SSN.

**Q13. My doctor's office always uses my ID card with SSN as proof of my TRICARE eligibility. How will my doctor validate my eligibility?**

A13. The 11 (eleven) digit DoD Benefits Number is currently associated with the beneficiary's SSN within DEERS. Medical providers will use the DoD Benefits Number on new ID cards. DEERS will recognize this number and the process will be transparent to both the beneficiary and the provider.

Further questions about the plan may be emailed to [CACsupport@osd.pentagon.mil](mailto:CACsupport@osd.pentagon.mil).

[Source: TREA Washington Update 22 Apr 2011]



### Military Trivia (3)

The first three ships of the Continental Navy were Hannah, Hancock and

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Franklin. The Continental Congress urged the colonies to arm and equip ships for the revolution but Rhode Island asked for a single Continental Navy. General George Washington had already bought one ship, “The Hannah”, and shortly after that the “Hancock” and “Franklin” set sail under Congressional orders. The “Hannah” first set sail in September of 1775 and the other two in October. There were about fifty ships used during the revolution.

After the American Revolution, under the Articles of Confederation, the United States could not afford to maintain a single warship economically, so the fleet was disbanded in 1785. It was reestablished in 1793 under the Constitution and called the United States Navy.

TO BE CONTINUED...

[Source: RAO Bulletin Baguio City RP]